

EFL STUDENTS' IMAGINED IDENTITIES AND INVESTMENTS IN THEIR LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

A lot of interests have been drawn to identity research in language learning, which used post-structuralist approach (Lamb, 2009). There are many constructs developed to relate identity and language learning, but research using imagined identity and investment concepts are limited, especially in EFL context. To fill in the gap, this study aimed to examine EFL students' imagined identities and investments in their learning process. In imagined identities, "learners imagine who they might be, and who their communities might be, when they learn a language" (Jenkins, 2005 & Jenkins, 2007 as cited in Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). On the other hand, investment "is a sociological construct, and seeks to make meaningful connections between a learner's desire and commitment to learn a language and their changing identities" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). These notions are relevant with learning process itself since there is a certain social context in which learners can participate and that context creates possibilities to learn English (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Thus, when language learners invest in the target language, they also invest in their own identity (Norton, 2001). The data were obtained through Focus Group Discussions, classroom observations, and an interview. Findings of the study showed that participants imagined different future jobs that represented their future identities. They could also define their imagined communities and how both were related to their current language learning. Besides, their investments in classroom activities were evident and they were able to recognize in which practices they invested more.

Key words: imagined identity, investment, learning process